



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**University of Illinois Extension
Sangamon, Menard, and Logan Counties
Extension Council & Board Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.
Logan County Extension Office and Online Via Zoom**

- **Call to Order** – Chairman Dixon call the meeting to order at 7:13 pm.
- **Council Members & Staff Present:** Clay Irwin, Elsie Ransdell, Vera Small, Nancy Dixon, Janet Estill, Emma Wankel, Katie Smith, Jacob Hartman, Phil Sidles, Dave Opperman, David Mendenhall, Bill Bree and Extension staff Terri Miller Casey.
- **Previous Meeting Minutes**
A motion was made by Vera Small and seconded by Dave Opperman to accept the October 2021 meetings minutes. The motion passed.
- **Introductions of Members & Guest**
Chairman Dixon asked everyone to briefly introduce themselves and their guest.
- **Open Meetings Act Training Requirement**
Miller explained that because Extension is a public entity they are required to follow the rules of the open meetings act which were established to ensure that meetings were held publicly and in an open manner. All council members must undertake Open Meetings Act training. The training is pretty straight forward and is offered for free on-line with the State of Illinois. Unfortunately, the state's website where one takes the online training is still down and has been for some time. She did not have an ETA on when it will be back up, but has been checking it once a month. Once it does come back up, she will send out an email with information so those who have not yet completed the training, can do so. She asked members that once they had completed the training to send either a hard copy of their certificate of completion to the Extension office, or they can send a digital copy to her via email.
- **Financial/Fiscal Updates**
Terri Miller reported that the annual unit audit went well with no major findings. Miller warned that inflation is on the rise. The cost of goods and services are going up dramatically and looking ahead salaries will surely have to increase to follow pace if Extension hopes to attract or retain workers. Extension has not requested an increase in funding from any of the County Boards since at least 2011 as far as she could tell, and in two of the counties we took significant reductions in funding in 2011 that has never been brought back up. We have managed to operate without increases by continuously looking for ways to economize and also through attrition by not rehiring many positions once vacated.

She explained that since she has been director, they have not refilled three positions and reduced two positions from 100% to 80% time. Because of greater efficiency and changes in our program delivery methods we have been able to absorb these losses, however with current rates of inflation Extension will need to increase funding in order to maintain basic levels of service, which are already extremely lean and at max efficiency.

All three counties in the Unit are P-Tell counties, which mean that taxing bodies can only request an annual increase in their levy at or below the amount of annual increase in CPI (Consumer Price Index). Working with our County Boards and their representatives on this Council, Miller would like to seek an increase in Extension's levy amount this upcoming budget year in all three counties equal to the official increase in CPI. The County Boards establish county budgets and approve levy request, so it will ultimately be up to them if the requested increases would be approved.

- **Program Updates**

Miller handed out copies of program reports prepared by Extension staff and pointed out highlights.

- **Staffing Update**

Miller reported that Melissa Bland started as the new Menard/Sangamon County office support associate August 30 and has been an excellent addition to the staff.

Miller also reported that unfortunately they had failed searches to refill both the Sangamon (Springfield area) SNAP-Ed Community Worker and Logan County 4-H Program Coordinator positions. They likely will not repost the Community Worker position until the new labor union contract is completed and there are updated salary numbers, or until we determine there is interest by qualified applicants. They are working to recruit interested applicants for the 4-H position and hope to repost it by the end of March.

- **Reaching New Audiences/Meeting Community Need - Outreach Questionnaire**

Due to COVID the establishment of a Unit wide Ag Sub Committee had been put on hold, however, Miller would like to regroup. She is currently looking for people who have an Agriculture background and/or interest in agriculture who would be willing to participate in informal meetings about what's going on in the Ag community and assessing needs. These individuals do not have to be on Extension Council and there is no commitment other than joining the conversation when they can.

Miller also informed that councilmembers should have received an email from her with a copy of the Unit Outreach questionnaire. Miller thanked those who had already filled it out and returned it. She said that the information is important in helping staff learn more about the communities they serve and how Extension can best serve them. It is also an important part in the Unit's three year planning process. She mentioned that the questionnaire had already spawned productive discussions among councilmembers related to the needs they are identifying. Miller then handed out blank copies of the questionnaire to councilmember who had not yet completed it and allowed them time to complete it.

- **Future Meeting Dates**

The following dates are being suggested for this year's upcoming council meetings.

Thursday, March 10, 2022 – 7 PM (Sangamon County Extension Office)

Thursday, June 9, 2022 – 7 PM (Menard County Extension Office)

Thursday, October 13, 2022 – 7 PM (Logan County Extension Office)

- **Public Input**

There was no public comments from the public.

- **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Bill Bree and seconded by Vera Small to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.